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Dear *Permission to be Powerful* Reader,

When you're someone who craves external validation, it says something important about you.

And if you're honest with yourself, it says something about how you see yourself. It points to the fact that you don't fully believe in your worth.

But here's the thing: A mature adult should feel valid in and of themselves. They should know, without question, that they count and matter. They should know they're good and worthy, regardless of what anyone else says or does.

And while it's important to feel supported, you should be your best advocate, your biggest fan, no matter how the world responds to you. That's

the foundation upon which genuine self-esteem is built.

But let me tell you something—I wasn't like that. Not for most of my life.

I wanted the validation of others. I craved it. I wanted women to like me. I wanted men to envy me. I wanted a career that shouted success, that proved I was important.

I would have proof of my worth if I could have those things. If I had success, approval, and attention, I would know I mattered.

But it didn't work that way.

I remember seeing a video or maybe an ad, but it stuck with me. In it, a professor stands before a class and asks, "Who wants \$20?" Of course, everyone raises their hands.

Then he crumpled the \$20 bill and asked again, "Who still wants it?"

The hands stayed up.

Then he stomped on it with his shoe, crumpling it further. And asked again, "Who wants it now?"

Everyone still raised their hands.

That's what self-worth is like. It's intrinsic. It doesn't lose its value when it's stepped on or crumpled. It's still worth \$20, no matter what happens to it.

But unfortunately, many of us are taught the opposite message. We grow up learning that we don't matter, that we're no good, or that our worth is conditional on the approval of others.

This is the path to seeking external validation, but I'm here to tell you it's false.

You see, validation is like a quick fix. It's a temporary high. You get the applause, the likes, the accolades, and for a moment, it feels good. But once that high fades, you're left with the same emptiness that pushed you to seek that approval in the first place. It doesn't fill you. It just feeds the hunger for more.

Jim Carrey once said, "Your need for validation will keep you invisible in this world." And it's so true. You remain invisible to your value when you depend on others to tell you you're worthy. You can't see the truth of your worth because you're too focused on the shifting opinions of others.

But here's the truth: Nothing in this world can match your worth. No amount of money, no amount of success, and not even the attention of a million people can make you more valuable than you already are.

Life itself is precious—your life.

Your existence is worth more than anything the world can offer. That's the truth.

Now, when it comes to building your self-esteem, there's a lot of talk about the Law of Attraction—and I agree with it, but I think it's more complicated than simply thinking "positive thoughts." It's not just about saying affirmations to get your self-worth up. You can't just chant, "I am worthy," without doing the actual work of rewriting your core beliefs.

Because if you've spent years seeking validation, you're up against one of the oldest, deepest beliefs in your psyche: the belief that you have no value—that you are not enough. And undoing that belief takes courage and effort.

It's about changing how you relate to yourself. And it's a massive shift that involves going against decades of old patterns—patterns that have been reinforced by others, your doubts, and society's standards. It's not easy. It's like swimming upstream.

But here's where the real breakthrough happens: It's when you finally decide that you are good enough—when you are worthy and valuable and

that your self-worth doesn't come from anyone else's approval.

You are the only person who gets to decide your worth. Nobody else.

Now, the most challenging part is the courage to be disliked. You see when you stop seeking validation from others, you have to be willing to accept that not everyone will like you. And that's okay. It's more than OK—it's necessary. Because you can't please everyone, and you shouldn't try.

When you stop seeking approval, you stop watering down your truth. You stop being the version of yourself that others want you to be and start being the person you're meant to be. This may alienate people and even hurt them, but in the long run, you'll feel a freedom that no amount of approval could ever provide.

And here's the kicker:

The people who don't like you or disapprove of you—they're not your people. They don't see you for who you are. But the right people who resonate with your true self will be drawn to you. That's the power of authenticity.

When you stop living for external validation and start living for yourself, you hit pay dirt in your life. That's when you start living the life you were meant to live. Not one is based on others' expectations, but one is built on your own self-respect and internal validation.

And when you finally embrace the idea that your worth is inherent—when you live it every day—that's when the true power comes. That's when you stop seeking, and you start living.

That's when you start living the life you want.

Let's talk about the need for external validation—how it can shape our actions, identities, and sense of self-worth.

I didn't know how to feel validated from within for most of my life. I didn't feel good enough unless others noticed me or acknowledged me. This craving for validation has manifested in many ways.

In my upcoming memoir, I opened up about how I sought validation, particularly in my relationships and career. I spent so much time trying to be the person I thought others wanted me to be. I wanted women to like me, but it wasn't just about having someone by my side. It was about proving something to myself that I was attractive, worthy, and interesting enough to be loved. So, I'd change myself and shift my personality and approach to keep that external validation coming.

When I was with Erika, a part of me constantly sought approval, always trying to get the affirmation that I was doing the right thing, that I was the right person for her. And it wasn't just about the relationship; it reflected my deep-seated need to feel validated in any form. When I could hold her attention, when she would validate me with a compliment or show affection, it would fill the hole inside, however briefly.

But here's the thing:

I was missing the point entirely.

I didn't know it then, but seeking external validation wouldn't bring me peace or true happiness. Instead, it became a vicious cycle—because it's not real validation if it's based on someone else's perception of you. It's like walking around with a cracked mirror—no matter how much you polish it, it can never truly reflect who you are unless it's whole. But I was too busy trying to make that mirror shiny, even though it was shattered.

Take my career, for example. In my upcoming memoir, I talked about my desperate need to prove that I was important and mattered in the grand scheme of things. I wanted a career that screamed success. I wanted the title, the recognition, the accolades. But deep down, it wasn't just about doing work that mattered to me—it was about showing the world that I had made it. I would tell myself, "If I just get that promotion or that recognition,

if I just prove myself to these people, then I will be worthy.” And I pushed myself to the limits, sacrificing parts of my soul to chase that approval.

But the truth? No matter how many trophies I collected or how many people told me I was doing great, a part of me still felt empty. It’s like chasing a shadow—it’s always just out of reach and beyond your grasp.

And that’s the core of the problem with seeking external validation—it can’t fill the void that stems from feeling that you’re not enough. I didn’t realize it then, but I was trying to fill a hole inside me by gathering external proof that I mattered. I sought validation through women, my career, and material success, hoping the world would tell me I was good enough. But nothing ever felt solid enough to hold me.

Here’s where the real lesson hit: true worth comes from within. It doesn’t matter how many people validate you, how many likes you get, or how much praise you receive—it will never be enough if you don’t already see your value.

As I got deeper into my journey, I realized how much of my identity had been tied to external approval. I was trying to play a game set up by other people’s standards—standards I had no control over. So, I sought to fit myself into molds that didn’t belong to me simply because I wanted to be seen.

I found myself at a crossroads. I began disconnecting from the outside world in the middle of that chaos. I started to see how my need for validation tied me to an identity that wasn’t mine. I started asking myself the hard questions: “Who am I without the approval of others?” “What do I truly want?” “Can I be enough without constantly seeking others to tell me so?”

The answer was correct before me, but I had been blind to it for so long. The validation I sought from others was never going to fill the hole. It was up to me to fill it by reclaiming my sense of self and trusting my worth.

Now, I dare to be unapologetically me, which means knowing when to walk away from validation. Sometimes, the hardest thing is to let go of the idea

that we need other people's approval to feel worthy. But when you stop seeking validation, something incredible happens: You start to live for yourself. You stop caring about who likes you and start focusing on loving yourself, and that's when real transformation happens.

There was a moment when I decided to stop chasing external validation—when I realized that my worth was never tied to how others saw me. The weight lifted, and for the first time, I felt free. Free from the need to prove myself. Free from the need to be liked. And that's the moment when I began to truly live.

In the end, seeking validation is a trap. The truth is that no one else can tell you your worth—you have to decide for yourself. When you stop seeking that validation and start standing on your own, that's when you start living the life that's truly yours.

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist.



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